Sumit Goel
Art and Science of Homoeopathic Pharmacy (with CD)

Leseprobe

Art and Science of Homoeopathic Pharmacy (with CD)
von Sumit Goel
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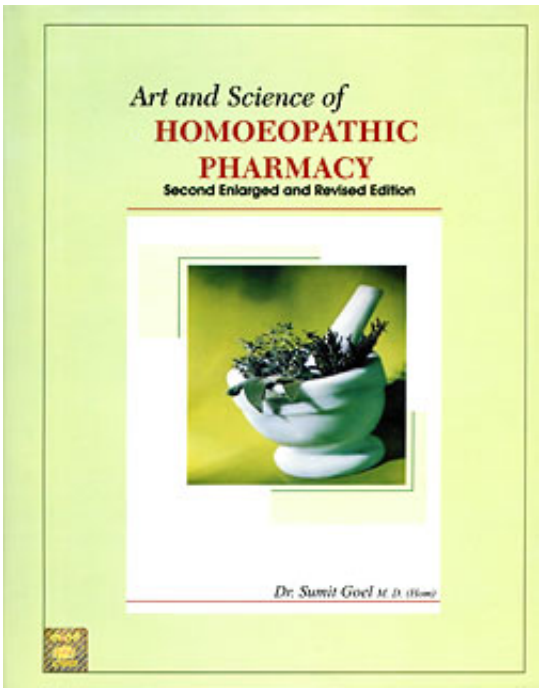

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PREPARATION OF MOTHER TINCTURES 'MODERN APPROACH'

In every instance, the dry crude substance is to be taken as the starting point from whence to calculate its strength, and with very few exceptions, the mother tinctures contain all the soluble matter of one grain of the dry plant in ten minims of the tincture. [HPUS]

As most tinctures are made from plants or their parts, their extraction deserves special attention. ***It is very important that tinctures should be of uniform strength.*** Old Hahnemannian methods involved preparation of tinctures of variable strengths. Preparations were based on the juice content of vegetable drugs. Accordingly four different formulae were devised for the preparation of the drugs. Variability of water contained in the same plant at different seasons and conditions of growth and protection and the variability of water in the solvents, especially alcohol, added to the variability of tinctures and of dilutions made from them. Hence a need to standardize the process of extraction of mother tinctures was necessary.

STANDARD UNIT OF MEDICINAL STRENGTH

While Hahnemann observed that plant moisture is a part of medicinal substance, the modern view is that the plant moisture constitutes merely as a vehicle or menstruum and forms no part of medicinal substance.

In accordance with the suggestion made by the Special Committee and adopted by the American Institute of Homoeopathy at Niagara Falls in 1888, the Pharmacopoeia Committee have prescribed the necessary rules to make the dilutions to correspond in medicinal strength (drug power) with triturations of the same number. This is in accordance with the intention of Hahnemann and also of that of the older authorities on homoeopathic pharmacy.

Hahnemann's object was to formulate a rule according to which all alcoholic medicinal solutions (tinctures, extracts, etc.) and their dilutions might be made of uniform drug power to be represented by the *dry crude drug* as the unit of strength in the case of tinctures made from *dry substances* and by the *plant juice* as the unit when made from *fresh green drugs.*

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To *avoid* the double standard made by Hahnemann and to secure uniformity in strength (drug power) of all preparations and attenuations, thereby making dilutions and triturations of equal degree correspond in medicinal strength, the Committee has, in all cases, made the dry crude drug, the unit from which to estimate strength.

It should be understood, however, that the fresh green materials are still required in the preparation of tinctures and that the plant moisture is to be regarded as a part of the vehicle or menstruum; it being evident that the water contained in the plant is but a solvent and forms no part of its medicinal substance.

Adopting this rule in tincture making process, H.P.U.S. have followed B.H.P., thereby securing uniformity in strength - ***"In every instance, the dry crude substance is to be taken as the starting point from whence to calculate its strength, and with very few exceptions, the mother tinctures contain all the soluble matter of one grain of the dry plant in ten minims of the tincture".***

The Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States (H.P.U.S.) has adopted the uniform one-tenth drug strength except in cases of few drugs. In order to obtain the uniform one-tenth drug strength of tinctures, H.P.U.S. has taken the dried drug as the unit to contain 1 gram of drug in 10 milliliters of tincture. In the preparation of mother tinctures made from fresh plants the plant moisture is taken into consideration when calculating for the one-tenth drug strength.

MOISTURE CONTENT

Moisture content of a plant is the amount of juice contained in a plant. Fresh succulent plants and other substances containing water should be treated according to the fundamental rule that the dry crude drug is taken as the starting point from whence to calculate the strength of the tincture. Hence, first take a suitable quantity of the fresh plant or part thereof and estimate the moisture content. Only the proportion of anhydrous drug is taken in calculation.

Hahnemann considered the moisture as a part of the active constituents of the plant and preparations were based on this consideration. But the strengths of the tinctures varied due to variability of moisture contained in the same plant at different times, seasons, and conditions of growth, procurement and storage.

DETERMINATION OF MOISTURE CONTENT

The moisture content of vegetable drugs can be estimated by the following methods.

- *Gravimetric method - Loss on Drying* [as per HPI]

  Procedure set forth determines the amount of volatile matter (i.e. water drying off from the drug). For substances appearing to contain water as the only volatile constituent, this procedure is appropriately used.

  Place about 10 g of drug (without preliminary drying) after accurately weighing (accurately weighed to within 0.01 g) it in a tarred evaporating dish. For example, for underground or unpowdered drugs, prepare about 10 g of the 'Official Sample' by cutting, shredding, so that the parts are about 3 mm in thickness.

  Seeds and fruits smaller than 3 mm should be cracked. Avoid the use of high-speed mills in preparing the samples, and exercise care that no appreciable amount of moisture is lost during preparation and that the portion taken is representative of the Official Sample. After placing the above said amount of the drug in the tarred evaporating dish, dry at 105° for 5 hours, and weigh. Continue the drying and weighing at one hour interval until difference between two successive weighings corresponds to not more than 0.25 percent. Constant weight is reached when two consecutive weighings after drying for 30 minutes and cooling for 30 minutes in a desiccator, show not more than 0.01 g difference.

- *Separation and Measurement of Moisture - Distillation Method*

  The 'loss on drying' methods can be made more specific for the determination of water by separating and evaluating the water obtained from a sample. This can be achieved by passing a dry inert gas through the heated sample and using an absorption train specific for water) to collect the water carried forward; such methods can be extremely accurate.

  The sample to be analyzed is placed in a flask together with a suitable water-saturated immiscible solvent (toluene, xylene, carbon tetrachloride) and pieces of porous pot and distilled. The water in the sample has a considerable partial pressure and co-distills with the solvent, condensing in the distillate as an immiscible layer. Apparatus devised for such a purpose permits the direct measurement of the water obtained and the less dense solvent (toluene, xylene) is continuously returned to the distillation flask.

- *Gas Chromatography Method*

  Gas chromatography methods have become important for moisture determination due to their specificity and efficiency. The water in the weighed, powdered sample can be extracted with dry methanol and subjected to chromatography on a column. The water separated by this means is readily determined from this chromatogram.

- ***Chemical Method - Karl Fischer Titration***

  This is particularly applicable for drugs containing small quantities of moisture. The reagents and solutions used in this method are sensitive to water and precautions must be taken to prevent exposure to atmospheric moisture. The Karl Fischer reagent used for this purpose, consists of a solution of iodine, sulphur dioxide and pyridine in dry methanol. This is titrated against a sample containing water, which causes a loss of the dark brown colour. At the end-point, when no water is available, the colour of the reagent persists.

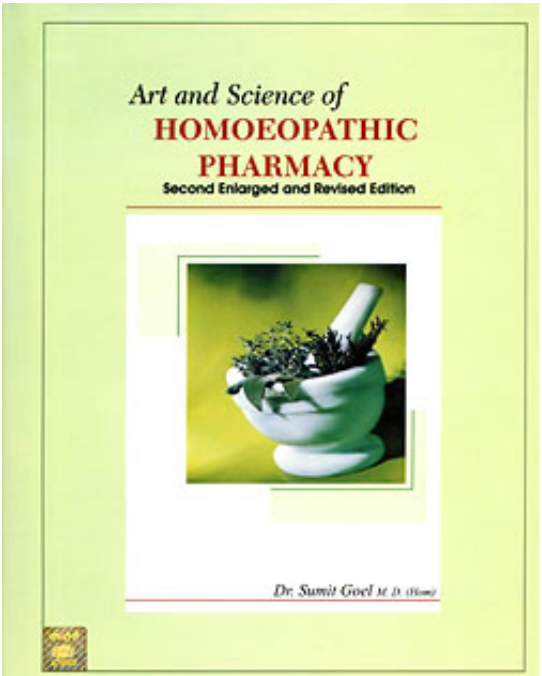
- ***Spectroscopic Methods***

  Water will absorb energy at various wavelengths throughout the electromagnetic spectrum and this fact is made a basis for its quantitative estimation. Measurements can be made in both the infrared and ultra-violet regions. This method is suitable for very small quantities of water.

The difference of weights between the fresh and dried plant substance will clearly indicate the weight of water evaporated, for which allowance must be made in the preparation of the menstruum. The dry crude material, after evaporation is taken as the unit of strength, the tincture being made to represent 1 part of this dry crude material in 10 parts of the extracted tincture. ***It is however to be understood that the fresh green plant is to be used in the preparation of the tincture.***

CALCULATION OF THE MOISTURE CONTENT

- Let 10 g of a sample of moist magma or fresh pulp of a plant, say *Azadirachta indica* be taken.
- It is dried to a constant weight on a water bath. The resultant weight is now 8g.
- Hence, 10 g of moist magma contains 8 g of dried drug substance and 2 g or 2 ml of plant moisture.
- Consider a standard formula for the preparation of mother tincture (1000 ml), taking the dried drug substance as the unit equal to 100 g.
- For 2 g of the dried drug to be present, the amount of pulp required is 10 g.
  Hence for 100 g of the dried drug substance to be taken as a unit, the amount of moist magma required = $^{10}{}_{o}{}^{x})^{0} / _{9} = 500$ g.
- Hence 500 g of moist magma of Azadirachta indica will contain solids 100 g and plant moisture 400 ml [500 - 100].



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